

Examples of Quality Places Efforts from Other States

Maggie Drummond, GrowSmart Maine, November 2008

VT: Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

The brief details: Operates like Land for Maine's Future, except that proposals have dual goals and typically combine affordable housing, conservation (including agriculture), and historic preservation. Board has public members and state agency representatives. Primarily bond funded, which goes into a Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, appropriated by the board. \$200 Million since 1987 has developed more than 1200 projects in 220 towns. This investment has directly leveraged approximately \$750 million from other private and public sources and resulted in the creation of 8,500 units of affordable housing, the conservation of more than 368,500 acres of agricultural and recreational lands and natural areas. Both housing and conservation projects are higher priority if they include historic preservation components.

Website: www.vhcb.org

MA: Community Preservation Act

The brief details: The Community Preservation Act has two levels, a local and a state. At the state level, a fund is created with revenue from deed fees in the amounts of \$10 and \$20 each. This state fund matches local funds, which are raised with voter approval from a local property tax. A local Committee has to be established to administer the funds, which can be spent on:

- Acquisition and preservation of open space
- Creation and support of affordable housing
- Acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes

At least 10% has to be spent on each of the three priorities, so you can't spend all the dollars on one priority. The amount of the state match changes from year to year depending on the size of the state fund and the number of communities that are participating.

Website: <http://www.communitypreservation.org/index.cfm>

CT: The Face of Connecticut

The brief details: This effort is slightly different than the VT and MA models in that the Face of Connecticut Fund would bolster state *agency* programs that already exist – in a sense it coordinates state agency bond requests into one and identifies the priorities that would be funded. In addition to bond funding and state appropriations, the fund can also accept private money and money from other sources. What was proposed was \$100 Million per year, going to

the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Protection, and Commissions on tourism/culture/historic preservation.

In addition to these existing programs, approximately \$35 million will fund a set of new programs designed to address gaps in existing state programs and meet the goals of the Fund through grants and loans to agencies, qualified non-profits and/or municipalities. The new programs, which will be administered by a 12 member Steering Committee consisting of Agency Heads and appointees of the Governor and leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly, will consist of the following:

Historic Villages and Urban Centers

- *Municipal Planning Grants* – Grants to municipalities to pay for expert assistance with land use and historic preservation planning, including help with updating Town Plans of Conservation and Development (TCPDs) and revising land use and historic preservation regulations to meet the objectives of Responsible Growth and TPCDs.
- *Urban Parks Grant Program* – Fund projects to create, renovate, and enhance urban parks.
- *Livable Communities Grant Program* – Grants for local initiatives that create links between land conservation, affordable housing and/or historic preservation.

Distinctive Landscapes

- *Greenways and Active Recreation Fund* – support the development of greenways and public recreational facilities.
- *Locally Significant Farms Fund* – Provide funds for the purchase of development rights or fee acquisition of small, locally important working farms that contribute to education, food security and/or economic development within their communities and/or the region; and for a forgivable loan program for beginner farmers for land acquisition and infrastructure investments in return for operating and stewarding a locally important working farm.

Projects of High Importance

- *Rapid Response Funds* - Distributions to existing agency programs based on demonstrated need.
- *Low interest loan program* - Provide low interest loans to municipalities and non-profits to assist in purchase of endangered open space, farmland and historic buildings, including restrictive covenants.

What passed in 2008:

The Connecticut Legislature passed "Face of Connecticut" Legislation in 2008, which would accomplish the following: (Note: they did not yet fund the effort.)

- Establishes the 15-member Face of Connecticut Steering Committee to direct the distribution of funds deposited into the Face of Connecticut account.
- Establishes the Face of Connecticut account.
- Increases the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's maximum price per acre for the purchase of development rights on farmland.
- Authorizes the Connecticut Department of Agriculture to establish criteria for a Community Farms program.
- Exempts open space from local property taxes if held by a non-profit.

- Reestablishes the Brownfields Task Force and requires recommendations on remediation options by January 2009.
- Modifies the state's brownfield program into separate grant and loan programs to improve eligibility options for a range of potential developer entities.
- Reduces the liability risk for a municipality that needs to assess contaminated property.

Website: <http://www.faceofconnecticut.org>

NH: NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program

NH's program has funding available for historic preservation and landscape conservation and protection- including farmland. Communities provide 80% of the funding for projects, and the state provides the final 20%. Only municipalities and non profits can apply for grants, and the funding comes from a state appropriation. There is some information about a deed fee of \$25 on the website, which looks like it may now be an additional source of funding for the state contribution. Like LMF, this quasi-state agency has an 18 member board which makes funding decisions based on criteria they've adopted. They have estimated the funding need at \$12 Million per year, which has never been met.

Website: <http://www.lchip.org/>

HI: Legacy Lands Act

In 2005 Hawaii passed the Legacy Lands Act, which dedicates portions of the real estate transfer tax to land conservation, state parks & natural areas, and affordable housing. There is no separate board, like LMF in Maine or the VT model; funding is administered by the state agencies under existing programs.

OTHER: Initiatives that passed on November 4th

Ohio: Voters approved a \$200 M bond that funds land conservation & brownfields redevelopment.

Milwaukee County: Approved an increase to county sales tax to fund parks, culture & recreation, transit and EMS services

Minnesota: Passed a sales tax increase to raise \$250 Million annually for clean water, land conservation, parks, trails and arts investments.